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ABSTRACT

Research in 37 neighborhoods in Flint, Michigan, investigated the association between the extent of racial integration in a neighborhood and residents' satisfaction with, awareness of, and attitudes toward various aspects of neighborhood and community life. The influence of demographic factors was also examined. The degree of neighborhood integration was determined by the proportion of blacks to whites in a neighborhood. The most important predictors of degree of neighborhood integration were found to be residents' satisfaction with the neighborhood, with race relations, with safety services, and with the economic climate; residents' income level; and degree of religious involvement. Findings indicated that whites became less satisfied as the black population in the neighborhood increased, and blacks were not satisfied in predominantly white neighborhoods. Moreover, blacks in black neighborhoods exhibited higher levels of satisfaction than blacks in other neighborhoods on such dimensions as race relations, neighbors, the economic climate, educational system, and the Flint area as a whole. (Author/MJL)

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NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRATION:

RACIAL DIFFERENCES AMONG SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS

by

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NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRATION:

RACIAL DIFFERENCES AMONG SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS

How is the urban experience changed for those Whites whose neighborhoods undergo racial succession--the inmigration of Blacks? This phenomenon has been a continuing process in most major urban areas in America. Some research into this question has centered on "White flight"--what factors account for White outmigration (Molotch, 69; Guest and Zuiches, 71; Frey, 79; Wurdock, 81). Other studies have concentrated on the impact of succession on property conditions and values (Downs, 68; Gillette, 57; Palmore and Howe, 62; Schietinger, 51). A third group of studies has examined the attitudes of White residents, especially towards their new Black neighbors (Morris, 73; Rossell, 78).

Unlike these studies, this one examines a wide range of social psychological factors which might be correlated with a neighborhood's degree of integration. This study measures the levels of resident satisfaction with numerous aspects of a community's physical and social environments, services, and economic conditions. Moreover, resident perceptions, behaviors, opinions, and several demographic factors are related to degree of neighborhood integration.

In this study the researchers had a unique opportunity to interview a large sampling of residents (3,719) stratified about equally among every community school district in the City of Flint, Michigan. This provided a large enough data base to examine the degree of racial

integration within each neighborhood--the primary criterion variable in question.

Most of these 37 elementary school districts have maintained the same boundaries for many years, supporting the assumption that these units of analysis correspond to the respondents' psychological orientation to them as their neighborhood. Adding to this orientation is a long history in Flint of citizen support for the community education concept--using the neighborhood elementary school as the focal institution for adult educational and recreational programs.

From the estimates of racial mix in these school districts, a degree of integration typology has been developed for the analyses (Table 1). Using these four classifications, the sample has been divided for each into racial subgroups. These have been analyzed so as to inspect how these racial and neighborhood groups differ across many independent variables.

Insert Table 1 about here

Method

A probability sample of 3,700 households was interviewed in Flint, a city of 162,000. These were stratified across 37 elementary school districts--approximately 100 households from each.

All but 250 interviews were conducted by telephone, using random digit dialing from a computer generated list. The 250 households were interviewed by the in-home method in those neighborhoods where residential telephone penetration was believed to be relatively low. (The

penetration for the entire city was 97 percent.) Average interview length was 42 minutes.

Independent Variables

The instrument contained about 200 items measuring various social-psychological and demographic dimensions. These included:

1. Citizen Satisfaction with 57 aspects of community life.
2. Degree of Citizen Knowledge of the community.
3. Optimism about the future of the neighborhood and community at large.
4. Perceived Power of citizens to influence community institutions.
5. Citizen Motivation (desire) to help solve neighborhood problems.
6. Citizen Commitmen to the community (strength of desire to stay in the Flint area).
7. Degree of Citizen Activity in the neighborhood and in the community at large.
8. Degree of Citizen Affiliation and Membership in local organizations.
9. Amount of Citizen Support for various civic institutions.
10. Amount of Citizen Trust and Confidence in community institutions.
11. Citizen Opinions regarding life in the neighborhood and community at large.
12. Identification of Neighborhood and Community-wide Problems.
13. Demographic Data--e.g., sex, age, race, income, etc.

The items were factor analyzed using the orthogonal rotation method. From this analysis 37 independent factors were defined. (These factors are displayed below in Figures 1, 2 and 3.) Each factor score was

created for further analysis by multiplying each item's raw score by it's loading value within the factor. The product of each item was then added to the others within the factor.

Dependent Variable

Degree of neighborhood integration was measured by examining the proportion of Blacks to Whites living within each of the 37 elementary school districts. Each respondent's file was then given a score representing the degree of integration for his neighborhood. Other minorities (nearly all Hispanic), representing less than one percent of the sample, were grouped with Blacks in determining the magnitude of integration.

Analysis

Two types of analyses were made with the data. First, transformations were run for neighborhood groups for each of the 37 factor scores. These transformations were calculated for the total sample (Figure 1), the White sample (Figure 2) and the Black sample (Figure 3). These transformations provide profiles which plot the degree of standardized deviation above or below the overall factor means.

The second type of analysis employed multiple linear regression, using the step-wise technique. Three runs were made (the total sample and each racial group) using the individual's neighborhood integration score as the criterion variable and all 37 factors as predictor variables.

Because of the large samples used in all three of these regressions, both critical t value and added variance accounted for (R^2) were used

to determine the degree of significance for predictors. If the proportion of variance accounted for was less than .005 it was not included in the model, even though the factor had a t value significant at the .05 level of probability. Since the various factors were measured on diverse scales, beta (standardized) coefficients were used as an index of relative importance among predictors.

Results

The results of the total sample's analyses (Figure 1) indicate generally stratified satisfaction scores--higher levels for White neighborhoods to consecutively lower scores as neighborhood groups increase in proportion of minority residents. Important exceptions are seen for the Black neighborhood group. This group shows very strong scores for attractiveness of community, climate, race relations, neighbors, educational systems, and overall satisfaction with the community.

No such racial stratification appears in the attitude and behavioral profile (Figure 1). All four neighborhood groups show little consistency. The White group shows higher trust in and support for local institutions. The higher the proportion of minorities, the higher is the level of religious involvement and the lower is the level of family income.

Unlike the standardized scores represented in the profiles of Figures 1, 2 and 3 (using the means of the four neighborhood groups), individual factor scores were regressed against the individual's neighborhood proportion of White score.

When examining the total sample, ten factors are identified as important predictors of degree of neighborhood integration (Table 2).

Most important of these is satisfaction with neighborhood--the higher the proportion of Whites in the neighborhood, the higher the level of satisfaction. Other strong predictors (significant beta coefficients) are satisfaction with race relations, safety services and economic climate as well as income level and religious involvement.

The latter factor is negatively related to proportion of Whites. Several other negative relationships are found--satisfaction with neighbors, and aesthetic quality. Other negative predictors are size of family and awareness (knowledge of community). These positive and negative predictors account for 17 percent of the total variance.

Insert Table 2 about here

White Sample Analyses

An examination of Whites living in the three neighborhood groups (Figure 2), indicate that satisfaction indices generally co-vary with the proportion of White residents. Those Whites living in Integrated/Black neighborhoods report markedly lower scores for satisfaction with neighborhood, race relations, neighbors, sense of security, and overall Flint area.

The picture is not so clear for the attitude and behavioral indices. Whites living in the Integrated/Black neighborhoods report far lower optimism, motivation, desire to stay and involvement scores. Moreover, this group is generally older and poorer than Whites in the other two groups.

The most important predictor for this sample group is satisfaction with neighborhood (Table 2) followed by level of income and sense of

security. Significant negative predictors are family, friends and church, economic climate, and family size. These factors account for 13 percent of the variance.

Black Sample Analyses

The profiles for the Black sample (Figure 3) indicate little consistent stratification by neighborhood groups. The greatest inconsistency is seen in the scores for the Black neighborhood group. It is the lowest of the three groups for neighborhood, home, safety services, government services, economic climate, and income level; it is highest for climate, race relations, educational systems, overall Flint area, desire to stay, affiliation/membership, religious involvement, and longevity.

Seven important predictors of proportion of White residents are identified (Table 2). As in the two previous regression analyses, satisfaction with neighborhood is the most important independent factor. The only other positive predictor is satisfaction with hospitals. All other important predictors are negatively correlated: neighbors, overall Flint area, awareness, religious involvement, and longevity (age and years in community). The total variance accounted for in this group is seven percent.

Insert Figures 1, 2 and 3 about here

Discussion

The most obvious finding of this study is that while Whites tend to be less satisfied the higher the proportion of minorities in their neighborhoods, it does not follow that Blacks are more satisfied the higher the proportion of Whites in their neighborhoods. In fact, Blacks living in Black neighborhoods show higher levels of satisfaction on several

dimensions--most notably race relations, neighbors, climate, educational systems, and overall Flint area.

Despite these differences between Whites and Blacks, satisfaction with neighborhood is consistently the most important predictor of degree of neighborhood integration in all multiple regression analyses. Moreover, this predictor is the only one both racial samples have in common.

The use of regression analysis in this study is not for the purpose of developing predictive models. The primary reason for its use is to identify the most important social-psychological correlates of degree of neighborhood integration. In interpreting these data it must be remembered that causal links between predictors and the dependent variable are not established. In fact, it is more likely that the direction of causality (if such exists) flows from the degree of integration to many of the social psychological indices.

The low proportion of variance accounted for within the dependent variable may indicate that some of the relationships are not linear. Other types of relationships are not identified by multiple linear regression analysis. In examining the plots of the standardized means (Figures 1, 2 and 3) it appears likely that several such non-linear relationships exist.

There are several negative predictors of proportion of White residents. For instance, religious involvement and size of family increase as percentage of Whites decreases. This is not too surprising since longevity is also negatively correlated. It is generally known that church membership is biased toward older people. Moreover, minority families are larger than White families.

A more counterintuitive finding is the negative correlations for satisfaction with economic climate, neighbors, aesthetic quality, family and friends, overall Flint area, and hospitals. These scores, as well as awareness, tend to drop as neighborhoods increase in proportion of White residents. Again, an explanation may be found in the interaction of the longevity factor. Age and years lived in the area (the elements of the longevity factor) increase as the proportion of White residents decrease. This factor probably outweighs racial mix of neighborhood in its relationship to the above negative predictors. In other studies using this data (Widgery, 82), longevity was found to be a strong and positive correlate of dependent satisfaction indices. It is also reasonable to assume that older residents have greater awareness or knowledge of the community.

Conclusion

These findings reach beyond the physical, economic, and demographic factors to the human experience. The concern is on the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of urban life and how these differ among Blacks and Whites in integrating neighborhoods. These concerns are central to the whole process of racial integration in America. To understand the social-psychological impacts of this phenomenon is useful in the quest for racial equality and interracial harmony.

Table 1

Neighborhood Integration Typology

Type of Neighborhood	Whites		Blacks/Others		Total	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
White	96	1,227	4	48	100	1,275
Integrated/White	73	745	27	269	100	1,014
Integrated/Black	27	192	73	507	100	699
Black	10	61	90	541	100	602
	62	2,225	38	1,365	100	3,590*

*One hundred ten respondents had no racial identification within their record.

Table 2

Best Predictors of Proportion of Whites Living in the Neighborhood

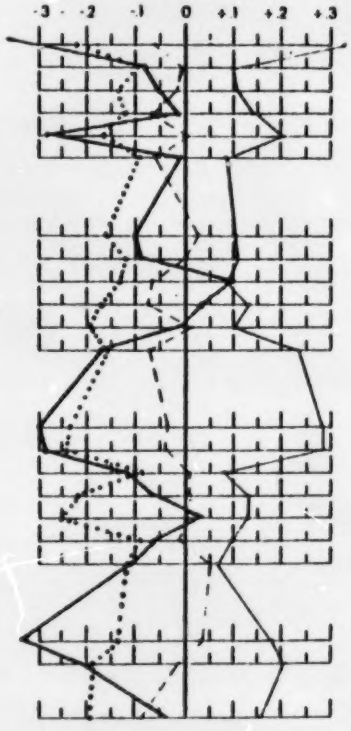
Predictors	Beta Coefficients: Total City Sample (N=3,590)	White Sample (N=2,225)	Black Sample (N=1,365)
Satisfaction - Neighborhood	.222	.193	.192
Religious Involvement	.157*		.052*
Income Level	.136	.100	
Satisfaction - Race Relations	.131	.162	
Satisfaction - Safety Services	.109		
Satisfaction - Economic Climate	.102	.056*	
Satisfaction - Neighbors	.078*		.079*
Size of Family	.065*	.071*	
Awareness (Knowledge of Community)	.057*		.096*
Satisfaction - Aesthetic Quality	.045*		
Satisfaction - Sense of Security		.092	
Satisfaction - Family and Friends		.055*	
Satisfaction - Overall Flint Area			.104*
Satisfaction - Hospitals			.074
Longevity (Age and Years in Area)	___	___	.070*
Total Variance Accounted for =	17%	13%	7%

*Negative coefficients

FIGURE 1.

SATISFACTION PROFILE

Z Transformations
Grand Mean



Physical Environment
Neighborhood
Traffic Conditions
Density of Trees
Attractiveness of Community
Home
Climate

Social Environment
Communication Systems
Community Leaders
Race Relations
Neighbors
Family, Friends, and Church
Sense of Security

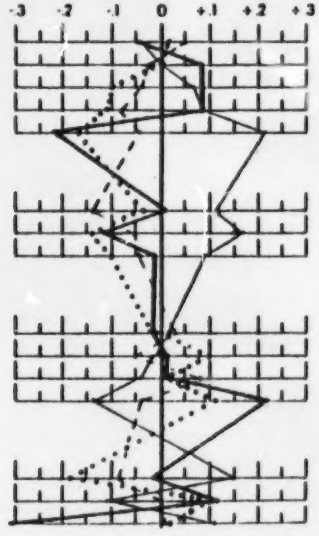
Community Services
Safety Services
Government Services
Public Transportation
Parks and Recreation
Educational Systems
Medical and Dental Services
Hospitals

Economic Conditions
Economic Climate of Area
Job (Own and Spouse)

Overall Satisfaction with Flint Area

ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIORAL PROFILE

Z Transformations
Grand Mean



Commitment
Degree of Involvement
Motivation to Help
Desire to Stay
Affiliation/Membership
Support for Local Institutions

Trust in Institutions
Political System
Business System
Communication System

Miscellaneous Factors
Optimism
Awareness
Potency
Religious Involvement

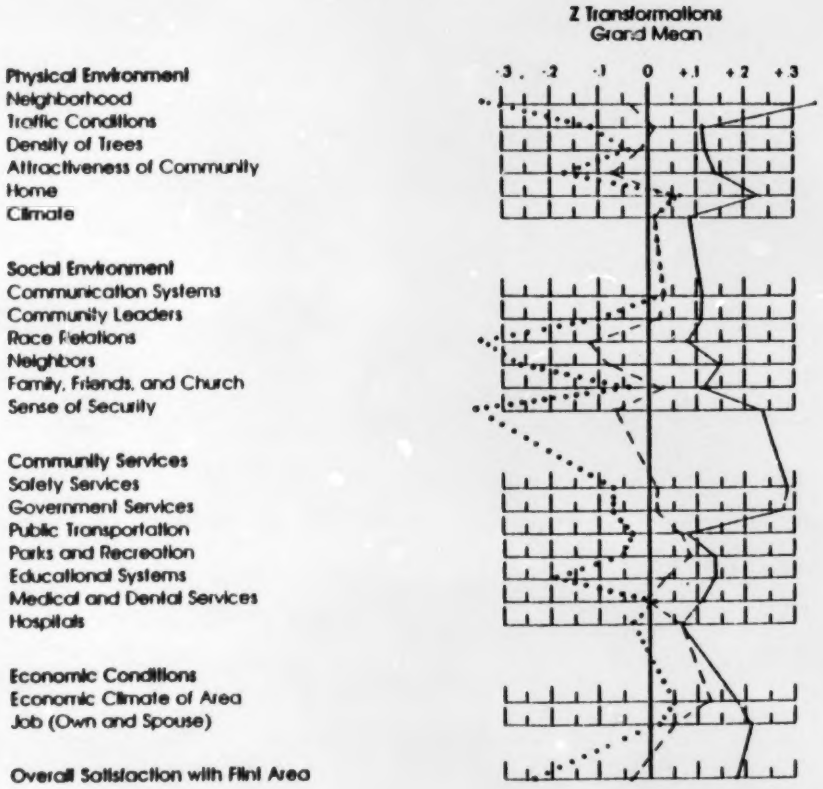
Demographics
Longevity
Size of Family
Income Level

Total Sample

White Neighborhood	——— (N=1,275)
Integrated/White Neighborhood	— — — (N=1,014)
Integrated/Black	. . . . (N= 699)
Black Neighborhood	——— (N= 602)

FIGURE 2.

SATISFACTION PROFILE



ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIORAL PROFILE

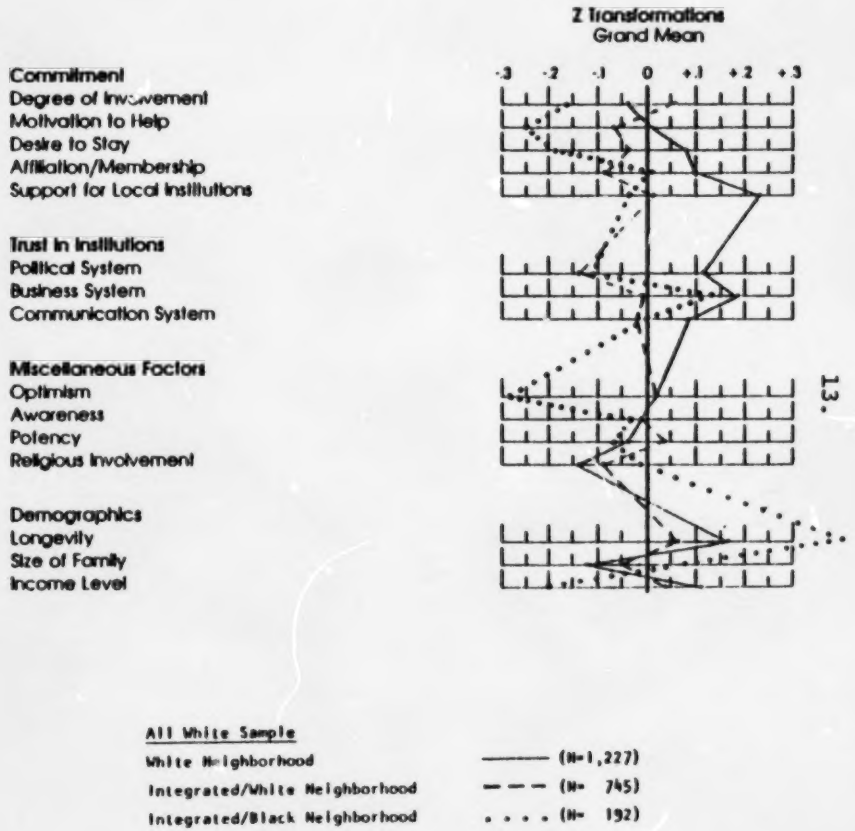
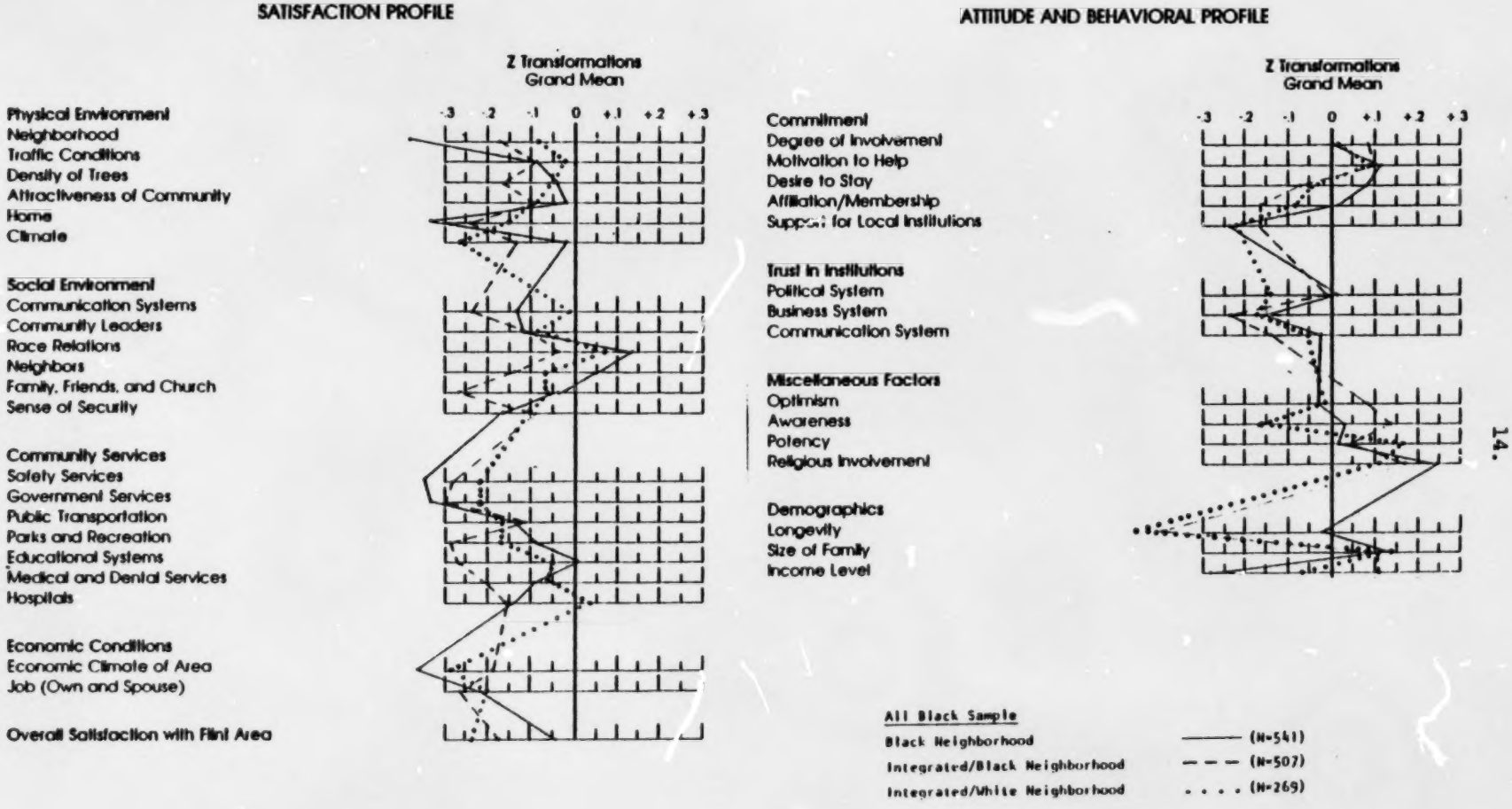


FIGURE 3.


SATISFACTION PROFILE
Z Transformations
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-3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3
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Support for Local Institutions
Trust in Institutions
Political System
Business System
Communication System
Miscellaneous Factors
Optimism
Awareness
Potency
Religious Involvement
Demographics
Longevity
Size of Family
Income Level
All Black Sample
Black Neighborhood (N=541)
Integrated/Black Neighborhood (N=507)
Integrated/White Neighborhood (N=269)

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